



U.S Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590
www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm

News

DOT 84-10
Friday, April 30, 2010
Contact: Karen Aldana
Tel.: 202-366-9550

Secretary LaHood: Michigan Becomes the 24th State to Ban Texting

WASHINGTON - U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today commended Governor Jennifer Granholm for signing an anti-texting bill into law making Michigan the 24th state with such a ban. The newly-signed legislation explicitly prohibits a person from reading, writing or sending text messages while driving a vehicle in Michigan. Granholm signed the bill into law on Oprah Winfrey's No Phone Zone Day program.

"The streets in Michigan will be safer with these laws on the books," said Secretary LaHood. "Distracted driving is an epidemic that kills thousands and injures hundreds of thousands more every year. Drivers should always devote their full attention to the road, not to texting and talking on a cell phone."

Under the ban, texting while driving is a primary offense. The new law prohibits texting while driving for drivers of all ages, except in the case of an emergency.

NHTSA has developed sample legislation that states can use as a starting point to craft measures to ban texting. The sample bill is patterned after President Obama's October 1, 2009, Executive Order prohibiting federal employees from texting while operating government-owned vehicles and equipment. Last year, more than 200 distracted driving bills were under consideration by state legislatures, and the pace is expected to increase this year.

Research compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration attributed an estimated 6,000 deaths and half-a-million injuries to distracted driving in 2008 alone. Last week, Secretary LaHood launched pilot programs in New York and Connecticut as part of a "Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other." campaign to study whether increased enforcement and public awareness can reduce distracted driving behavior.

For more information on distracted driving and the Department of Transportation's work, visit www.distractation.gov.